Canadian Centre
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Development

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REPORT FROM THE FIRST ANNUAL ACADEMIC ROUNDTABLE: TEACHING IN FOREIGN POLICY

Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

May 7, 1999
Ottawa, Ontario

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ISBN: E2-405/1999E
0-662-30861-1

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REPORT FROM THE FIRST ANNUAL ACADEMIC ROUNDTABLE: TEACHING IN FOREIGN POLICY

May 7, 1999
Ottawa

The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development organised and hosted the First Annual Academic Roundtable in Ottawa on May 7, 1999. Participants included academics from across Canada who are involved in foreign policy teaching, graduate students in the foreign policy field, along with officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency. As this was the first roundtable, a general topic was proposed: the situation of foreign policy teaching and research in Canada. The following report is from a day-long discussion.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

The co-chairs, **Steven Lee** (Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development) and **John English** (University of Waterloo) welcomed all the the roundtable and opened the discussion by signalling an open agenda. To start the discussions the relationship between foreign policy teaching and government deparments (i.e, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, National Defence, and CIDA) was suggested as a topic.

In the afternoon, **Fen Hampson** presented an overview of the CCFPD occasional paper: *The State of Canada's Foreign Policy Research Capacity* (NPSIA, Carleton University 1996). The paper outlines strengths in foreign policy research capacity to be: migration and population issues, international security, and Asia-Pacific. These areas of expertise were mainly concentrated in the University system and not in the 'think tanks.' The weaknesses included: human rights and civil society, the 'new emerging foreign policy agenda,' communications and technology, the United States, and Europe.

Professor Hampson suggested the main issues raised in the paper to be used as a basis for discussion. The report cited a lack of informal links between policy makers and the academic community, a lack of research centres situated in small or medium-size cities, the presence of research fragmentation between researchers inside and outside of Quebec (more pronounced in the functional areas than in the regional), and generally a pessimistic outlook for the future improvement of foreign policy research capacity.

The report outlined some of the ways in which foreign policy research capacity could be increased in Canada. Aside from requests for increased funding, certain creative solutions were proposed. These included increased use of networking between institutions (universities, government and NGO's), especially in the 'emerging' areas of foreign policy.

One problem underscored by the report was DFAIT and CIDA's catering to a certain limited academic clientele. It was also recommended that there be more opportunities to do research within government, and more collaborative projects between academia and government.

SYNOPSIS OF DISCUSSIONS

Much of the day's discussion revolved around foreign policy research capacity, with the link often being made between research and teaching. A brief debate arose concerning the goals of foreign policy teaching. Some were proponents of a liberal education where the goal is to produce individuals with sound analytical reasoning abilities, whereas others saw the need to produce graduates capable of working in specific areas such as NGOs, government, academia or the private sector. Some participants remarked that the Canadian university system is in crisis, and small departments have to make tough choices as to what they will teach, at the same time being pressured to create job-market-ready graduates.

Francophone participants noted the lack of French textbooks and readers for students. Participants suggested a French language textbook or reader should be developed to meet an immediate need in the Francophone foreign policy community. Either more support should be given to young scholars to write such a textbook, or as a stopgap alternative, a translation be done of an existing standard textbook. A common effort between English and French scholars could also be encouraged to create a bilingual foreign policy reader.

The question of funding orientation also arose in the course of discussions. Two major potential sources of foreign policy research funding, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and DND were seen to direct foreign policy research in certain, not necessarily desirable, directions. This issue stimulated the debate over curiosity driven versus policy relevant research: should the latter take precedence over the former? To whom should the policy be relevant? Should policy be only generated for DFAIT, DND and CIDA, or are there other actors that we should be considering?

Participants criticised SSHRC for being pressured from Industry Canada and consequently focussed on applied research. The representative from SSHRC reconfirmed her organisation's commitment to fundamental research, although there is a tendency in their contributions toward applied social research. She suggested that perhaps foreign policy researchers should identify key thematic areas and regions, such as immigration or the Far East, which respond to the needs of policy makers. The system of academic peer evaluation was seen as a barrier to effective foreign policy research, and other methods of evaluating academics should be considered such as their 'value-added' contributions to foreign policy teaching. An alternative to the peer evaluation system could be directed funding.

Participants suggested that the DND's Security and Defence Forum (SDF) strikes a healthy balance between curiosity driven and policy relevant research. This programme (presently 8.5m over five years; see annex), having been in existence in various forms since 1967, has built an impressive

capacity for defence and security related research in Canada. Clearly, the investment that DND has made to develop security and defence research and teaching capacity in Canada has paid off.

Participants also criticised the SDF programme as a barrier to developing *foreign policy* research capacity. The SDF programme, to a large extent, determines the direction of foreign policy research in Canada. It also caters to a regular clientele of institutions and academics, thus limiting the variety of perspectives possible on foreign policy issues. The defence and security orientation of SDF funded research also limits foreign policy teaching capacity by limiting the number of foreign-policy-specific course offerings at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The preponderance of SDF funding also encourages graduate students to specialise in defence related areas, and not in foreign policy research. Furthermore, SDF directly funds undergraduate students through scholarships, a mechanism which does not exist in the foreign policy field. Moreover, DND absorbs many of these students into its ranks once they have graduated, further increasing the incentive to pursue defence related research. Paradoxically, at the beginning of their studies, more students exhibit an interest in foreign policy research than in defence oriented research, yet the funding structures channel them into the latter. At the present time there are no foreign policy scholarships available to graduate students, a situation which should be rectified.

This preponderance of SDF funding leads to limited perspectives from which foreign policy is examined and developed. Non-traditional perspectives should be taken into account such as gender, critical theory, and in general a diversity of approaches should be taught. Furthermore, foreign policy should be examined from disciplines outside of Political Science, such as Geography or History. It was also suggested that academics should not be pressured by policy driven funding. Their role is rather to analyse foreign policy, not to make it.

In addressing the problem of under funding, or funding from one source, participants suggested that different poles of attraction are needed to encourage the development of foreign policy research and teaching capacity in Canada. For example, increased linkages could be made with international organisations such as the United Nations, or the Organisation of American States. Funding could also be solicited from the private sector, where increasingly, foreign policy knowledge is needed. Also, the implications of foreign policy increasingly extend beyond the exclusive purview of the state, therefore researchers and students should look more towards non-state actors such as the provinces or non-governmental organisations for potential partnerships.

The lack of a foreign policy network also seemed to reduce foreign policy research and teaching capacity in Canada. One participant noted that twenty years ago, the foreign policy community was better integrated than today, therefore a *relancement* of this community building effort would be desirable. It was noted that the Canadian Political Science Association is losing its relevance for foreign policy scholars, with more and more Canadian academics attending the International Studies Association meetings held in the United States. This weakens the international relations network in Canada. Some suggested that Canadian equivalent of the International Studies Association be created as it is hard to publish without the support of a foreign policy relevant

Canadian based association. There was also support for increased funding for networking amongst foreign policy scholars.

Participants proposed that the links between academics and government could be strengthened. For example, the speakers programme from DFAIT could be more broadly publicised, and DFAIT could give professors more advanced notice when offering speakers to universities. More informal 'brown bag' meetings between DFAIT personnel and academics could be encouraged. In addition, academics should be allowed to observe during international negotiations, and not only be called upon as expert participants. Participants also noted the Léger, Cadieu and Robertson scholarships available to academics to do research at DFAIT were not always being used. Electronic communications could also be used to greater advantage to create a community of foreign policy researchers, students, teachers and professionals in Canada.

Recommendations to increase foreign policy teaching capacity in Canada

The main recommendations coming out of the discussions were that:

- a homologous programme to SDF, specifically supporting foreign policy research and teaching, be examined, which strikes a balance between fundamental and policy-driven research;

- within this programme, scholarships in foreign policy research be made available to graduate students;

- a French language foreign policy textbook, reader or translation of an existing English language textbook be immediately supported;

- the Canadian equivalent of the International Studies Association be created or alternative networks be supported to increase support for foreign policy academics and students, and to increasing contacts between foreign policy makers, practitioners and theoreticians;

- researchers be allowed to observe during international negotiations and;

- low-cost, creative ways be explored to strengthen the foreign policy teaching and research community across Canada.

The State of Canadian Foreign Policy and International Relations
Teaching and Research in Canada
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7 May 1999
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